

Message Text

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 10704 071643Z

21

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 10704

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, US

SUBJECT: THE SOVIETS AND THE BICENTENNIAL

1. SUMMARY. SOVIETS IN MOSCOW HAVE RESPONDED TO BICENTENNIAL WITH CLEAR AND MEASURED REAFFIRMATION OF WILLINGNESS TO PROCEED POSITIVELY IN U.S. - SOVIET RELATIONS. ATTENDANCE AT RECEPTIONS AND MEDIA COVERAGE HAS BEEN VERY GOOD, THOUGH NOT OVERWHELMING. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE COMMENT HAS BEEN WARM AND CONGRATULATORY, WITH A NOTE OF RETICENCE USUALLY TIED TO ELECTION YEAR IN U.S., BUT SOMETIMES ALSO TO CONCERN OVER ARMS RACE SPIRAL. GROMYKO ALONG WITH 2100 OTHER GUESTS ATTENDED SPASO HOUSE RECEPTION. AMBASSADOR'S FIVE MINUTE SPEECH WAS CARRIED ON EVENING NEWS PROGRAM VREMYA IN PRIME TIME BEFORE AUDIENCE OF THIRTY TO FIFTY MILLION SOVIETS, ACCORDING TO SOVIET ESTIMATES. LARGE SOVIET-SPONSORED MEETING JULY 6 WITH LIVE AUDIENCE OF ABOUT FIFTEEN HUNDRED ALSO GENERATED THREE MINUTES OF COVERAGE ON VREMYA. ALL SPEECHES ON THAT OCCASION CALLED FOR STRENGTHENING RELATIONS AND INCREASING CONTACTS. INTERESTING FEATURE OF RESPONSE HAS BEEN DISTINCTION BETWEEN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN, WITH CIVILIANS NOTABLY MORE RELAXED. END SUMMARY.

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 10704 071643Z

2. AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS ON NATIONWIDE EVENING TV NEWS VREMYA JULY LASTED FIVE MINUTES, WERE MOVED UP FROM PREDICTED SPOT JUST BEFORE THE WEATHER TO 9:20 P.M., AND WERE FAVORABLY REPORTED IN BRIEF TASS ITEM CARRIED IN

PRAVDA AND OTHER CENTRAL PAPERS THE NEXT DAY. STRESS WAS ON STATEMENTS THAT TWO COUNTRIES HAVE ALWAYS LIVED IN PEACE, HAVE RECENTLY EMBARKED ON NEW EFFORTS FOR GOOD OF MANKIND, AND THAT FURTHER PROGRESS IS LIKELY SINCE PEACE IS COMMON GOAL.

3. ATTENDANCE AT JULY 5 SPASO RECEPTION WAS GOOD IN BOTH VOLUME (2100) AND RANK (POLITBURO MEMBER GROMYKO, WHO RARELY ATTENDS NATIONAL DAYS, DEPUTY PM ARKHIPOV, YJPREME SOVIET PRESIDUM SECRETARY GEORGADZE, AND THREE MINISTERS --ALEKSEYEVSKIY (WATER RESOURCES), GUZHENKO (.MARITIME FLEET) AND PETROVSKIY (HEALTH). DAO HAS ALREADY NOTED RELATIVE PAUCITY OF FLAG-RANK OFFICERS; ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, BY CONTRAST, SENT EVERYONE EXCEPT AILING PRESIDUM PRESIDENT ALEKSANDROV. GROMYKO HIMSELF AND MANY OTHER OFFICIAL GUESTS COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON AMBASSADOR'S TV REMARKS, AND PRAVDA DULY REPORTED RECEPTION, WITH RANKING ATTENDEES, NEXT DAY.

4. SOVIETS' OWN RECEPTION JULY 6, JOINTLY SPONSORED BY USSR-USA SOCIETY AND INSTITUTE OF USA AND CANADA AND HELD AT NEW MOSCOW ART THEATER, WAS ALSO WELL-ATTENDED. KEYNOTERS WERE FIRST DEPUTY FONMIN KUZNETSOV, USA INSTITUTE DIRECTOR ARBATOV, SOCIETY PRESIDENT ACADEMICIAN BLOKHIN AND VICE-PRESIDENT COSMONAUT KUBASOV; ALSO PRESENT WERE VICE PREMIER TIKHONOV, SUPREME SOVIET PRESIDUM VICE CHAIRMAN NIYAZBEKOV, AND MINISTERS PETROVSKIY AND LEIN (FOOD INDUSTRY). PRAVDA AND OTHER CENTRAL PRESS CARRIED LONG, FAVORABLE TASS REPORT ON EVENT NEXT DAY, ALSO NOTING AMBASSADOR'S REMARKS ON CONTAINING ARMS RACE AND DEVELOPING EXCHANGES.

5. MEDIA COVERAGE, BEYOND REPORTING EVENTS, HAS BEEN MODERATE, AND ALSO MODERATELY FAVORABLE. BEYOND JULY 4 REMARKS BY AMBASSADOR, EVENING VREMYA JULY 6 ALSO CARRIED PORTION OF KUZNETSOV'S ADDRESS CITING BREZNHEV'S REAFFIRMATION AT 25TH CPSU CONGRESS OF SOVIET INTENT TO CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 10704 071643Z

CONTINUE IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH STRICT OBSERVANCE OF SPIRIT AND LETTER OF MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS UNDERTAKEN. PRAVDA AND IZVESTIYA HAVE CARRIED EXTENSIVE REPORTING FROM U.S. CORRESPONDENTS ON AMERICANS' OWN FESTIVITIES, WITH ACCENT ON TENSIONS BETWEEN PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES OF REVOLUTION AND OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS. KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, AFTER NASTY JULY 2 REVIEW OF BOOK CALLED "USA - 200 YEARS, 200 WARS," HAS GENERALLY RESTRICTED ITSELF TO SMALL REPORTING ITEMS STRESSING U.S. PROBLEMS. HIGH POINT OF PRESS COVERAGE WAS PRAVDA JULY 4 COMMENTARY ON CC AMERICAN DESK OFFICER NIKOLAY MOSTOVETS, WRITING AS AN ACADEMIC. MOSTOVETS MANAGED TO SOUND GENERALLY FAVORABLE AND NON-PESSIMISTIC IN A RIGIDLY ORTHODOX THEO-

RETICAL FRAMEWORK REplete WITH LENING AND MARX QUOTATIONS AND REFERENCES TO CPUSA. BEGINNING WITH "PROGRESSIVE" NATURE (FOR THE TIME) OF REVOLUTIONARY GOALS AND PROCEEDING THROUGH WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS, MOSTOVETS ENDED BY PERCEIVING TWO PATHS FOR U.S. IN THIRD CENTURY: KEEPING TO CONSERVATIVE POSTWAR TRACK, OR RETURNING TO DEMOCRATIC TRADITIONS. HIS CONCLUSIONS: "(MANY AMERICANS) ARE TURNING TO THE REVOLUTIONARY TRADITIONS OF THE PAST".

6. PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SUBSTANTIVE REponse HAS CONVERGED ON THEME OF WILLINGNESS TO PROCEED WITH U.S. -SOVIET DETENTE ENUNCIATED BY BREZHNEV IN 25TH CONGRESS REPORT AND AGAIN AT ECPC MEETING IN EAST BERLIN. KUZNETSOV'S QUOTE FROM BREZHNEV CARRIED ON JULY 6 VREMYA WAS ALSO ON THE BANNER BEHIND THE PODIUM AT THE RECEPTION. ON BALCONY WAS QUOTE FROM LENING DESCRIBING AMERICAN REVOLUTION AS COMPLIMENTARY MANNER AS WAR OF REAL LIBERATION, REAL REVOLUTION.

7. OTHERWISE, TONE OF REMARKS HAS BEEN WARM AND CONGRATULATORY, BUT PERHAPS ALSO A LITTLE RETICENT. AT SPASO JULY 5, GROMYKO DID NOT GO BEYOND GENERAL REMARKS EXCEPT TO PRAISE AMBASSADOR'S SPEECH AS CARRIED ON VREMYA. FOR HIS PART ARBATOV SAIS HE REALIZED RELATIONS ARE FROZEN DURING THE CURRENT ELECTION CAMPAIGN, HOWEVER, THE SOVIETS, HE SAID, WOULD ALL LIKE TO MOVE AHEAD IN A POSITIVE DIRECTION BUT KNOW THAT "SOME PEOPLE" ON THE AMERICAN SIDE DO NOT FEEL THE SAME WAY. STATE COMMITTEE FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DEPUTY ALEKSENKO, IN CONVERSA-
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 MOSCOW 10704 071643Z

TION WITH SCI COUNSELOR, PROFESSED TO BE UNCONCERNED ABOUT POSTPONEMENTS OF JOINT COMMISSION MEETINGS, AND COMMENTED THAT IT MAY BE TO SOVIET ADVANTAGES TO WAIT UNTIL NEXT YEAR, WHEN PERHAPS THERE WOULD BE NEW FACES ON THE U.S. SIDE. ON THE OTHER HAND, OTHER OFFICIALS WERE STILL EXPRESSING SOME PERPLEXITY ABOUT U.S. INTENTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH CANCELLATIONS.

8. THE SPASO RECEPTION ALSO HAD SOME SPECIAL ACCENTS. SEVERAL CORRESPONDENTS NOTED THAT PERHAPS SPASO IS THE ONLY ROOF WHICH CAN SHELTER GROMYKO, AMAL'RIK AND ORLOV TOGETHER; DISSIDENT GUESTS, BE IT SAID, WERE ON THEIR BEST BEHAVIOR. MOSTOVETS SEEMED GENUINELY PLEASED WHEN EMBOFF PICKED UP FAVORABLE NOTES FROM HIS PRAVDA ARTICLE AND WAXED ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT INNOVATIVE REVOLUTIONARY CHARACTER OF OUR REPUBLIC'S ORIGINS. WHEN EMBOFF NOTED TREMENDOUS DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIS ARTICLE AND JULY 2 KRASNAYA ZVEZDA BOOK REVIEW, MOSTOVETS REPLIED ONE HAD TO KEEP IN MIND KRASNAYA ZVEZDA'S AUDIENCE.

9. AT THE SAME MOMENT, USA INSTITUTE OFFICIALS AND OTHER SOVIETS WERE WORKING THE CROWD WITH EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN

OVER THE ARMS RACE. DEPUTY DIRECTOR YE. S. SHERSHNV,
TOLD SCI COUNSELOR THAT NEITHER SIDE COULD
AFFORD ANOTHER ROUND BUT THAT IT MIGHT ALREADY BE TOO
LATE.

10. COMMENT. SOVIETS APPROACHED BICENTENNIAL IN
MOSCOW AS OCCASION FOR A GESTURE MAKING CLEAR THEIR
FIRM RESOLUTION TO PROCEED WITH IMPROVEMENT IN U.S. -
SOVIET RELATIONS. PERHAPS MOST INTERESTING FEATURE OF
THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE RESPONSE WAS THE DISTINCTION
BETWEEN CIVILIAN AND MILITARY. WHILE CIVILIANS HAVE
BEEN RELAXED, AMIABLE AND CONGRATUALTORY, MILITARY
ATTENDANCE JULY 5 WAS LOW, AND KRASNAYA ZVEZDA HAS BEEN
CONSISTENTLY MEAN-MINDED ABOUT BICENTENNIAL.
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